

AMENDMENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-6. Canceled.

7. (Currently amended) A laser machining method for cutting a workpiece by moving the workpiece relative to a laser beam shining means while applying a laser beam to the workpiece by said laser beam shining means accompanied by the generation of debris at the time of cutting the workpiece, which comprises:

a protective film coating step of coating a substrate ~~to-be-machined~~ surface of the workpiece where debris deposits with a protective film;

a laser beam shining step of applying a laser beam to the workpiece through said protective film; and

a protective film removal step of washing away said protective film together with the debris from said substrate surface by water after completion of said laser beam shining step,

wherein said protective film is formed by coating said ~~to-be-machined~~ substrate surface with a liquid resin and allowing the resulting coating to be hardened with the passage of time, and

wherein said liquid resin is water-soluble.

8-11. Canceled.

12. (Currently amended) The laser machining method according to claim 7, wherein the workpiece is a semiconductor wafer having a circuit formed on said substrate surface.